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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION  
AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AGENCY

TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

Although Nature promises bumper crops, farmers' ingenuity and resourcefulness face another severe test this year. Winter wheat production is expected to be the greatest in history. Conditions over the country favor unusually large crops of spring wheat and other grains.

All that is produced this year can be used, because the needs created by war and its aftermath are virtually limitless.

Also in prospect, however, are serious transportation and storage difficulties. The effectiveness with which these difficulties are met and solved will determine the value of the farmers' contribution in 1945.

Wheat - An Immediate Problem

At the moment, wheat presents the most urgent problem. The harvest of winter wheat is approaching, some 10 days earlier than usual. There is little time to prepare for it.

There were some 239 million bushels of wheat on farms April 1 -- 1500 trains of 100 cars each will be required to move it to market. This amount is 19 million bushels more than a year earlier but 56 million less than on April 1, 1943. How much of this can be moved before harvest time is problematical.

The wheat carryover on July 1 is expected to be between 350 and 375 million bushels. It was 316 million bushels on July 1, 1944.

In view of prospective demands, the only reason that a carryover of this size presents difficulties is the shortage of available transportation to move the wheat from country shipping points. The car shortage, which has existed during the past 5 months, has resulted in wheat being backed up on farms and in country elevators.

The shortage of freight cars is emphasized by the fact that only 51 million bushels of wheat reached primary markets during the first 3 months of 1945, compared with 157 million bushels in the same period in 1944 and 120 million bushels in 1943.

Wheat is being exported as fast as it arrives at ports because it is needed to feed the starving people of reoccupied countries. It is so essential that wheat cargoes are given priority over many of the munitions of war.

Flour mills are running at full capacity and it is difficult to maintain their reserve stocks of wheat. Mills also have the problem of getting labor and freight cars to move the flour and mill feeds out of their plants.

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### The Transportation Situation

The railroads carried 55 percent more freight with only 12 percent more boxcars in 1944 than in 1941. Demands for shipment of war materials during 1945 are expected to be even greater, with no corresponding increase in the number of boxcars.

Heavy war freight movement, coupled with labor shortages and other difficulties, has slowed down loading and unloading of boxcars and cut the number available for carrying grain and other farm commodities.

Freight trains are frequently delayed because of unavailability of crews, further adding to the shortage of cars available for loading.

A heavy concentration of boxcars has occurred on Eastern railroads, with corresponding decrease in the number on Western roads.

To encourage return of boxcars to the West, the Office of Defense Transportation has reduced the minimum merchandise loading requirement for cars going through into the grain belt to 5 tons, only half the war-time minimum loading ordinarily required.

The Interstate Commerce Commission, at ODT's request, has issued an order requiring permits for shipment of grain from the Mid-continent producing area to points east of the western shore of Lake Michigan, the Illinois-Indiana State Line, and the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, between now and July 31, 1945. By encouraging movement of Western grain to Great Lake ports and the big milling centers such as Minneapolis, the order will reduce the number of long hauls and speed the return of boxcars to the grain-producing areas.

Even so, it is doubtful that more than a fraction of the 5,000 to 7,000 boxcars normally on sidings ready to be loaded with grain at harvest-time will be available in advance of the 1945 harvest.

Nor can motor trucks be expected to ease the situation brought about by shortages of boxcars in relation to increasing demands. Trucks are wearing out faster than they are being replaced, and tires and gasoline are scarce. Current allocations call for production this year of only a quarter of the trucks and half the heavy-duty tires for civilian use that ODT recommended. However, repair parts are plentiful, so that thousands of trucks are kept in operation which under normal conditions would be scrapped and replaced.

### The Storage Situation

In some areas, acute storage problems exist. Many farm bins and country elevators in those areas are full of 1944 wheat and other bulk grains. The situation appears to be most serious in the 10 Great Plains States.



Country elevators for the country as a whole contained 129 million bushels of wheat on April 1, 1945, compared with 66 million bushels on April 1, 1944.

The Commodity Credit Corporation has begun moving wheat out of terminal storage. Commodity loans on wheat were not renewed at maturity this year. Available transportation will limit the quantity of wheat that can be moved out of producing areas before harvest.

There probably will be times when terminal warehouses have a great deal of empty space because boxcars and trucks are not available to bring the wheat in. This was the situation on April 1, when only 100 million bushels of wheat were in terminal positions, compared with 124 million a year earlier and 212 million on April 1, 1943.

But more than usual will have to be stored on farms and in local communities.

New steel bins will not be available for the storage of wheat this year.

New lumber suitable for building permanent storage bins will be scarce, and priorities will be necessary to obtain it.

Production of wood slat snow fencing in 1945 is expected to be far below demand.

Several manufacturers have agreed to make cribbing wire in sizes and styles proved best for emergency small-grain storage if sufficient orders are received early enough so that they can make delivery before harvest time.

#### The Situation Can Be Met

Difficulties facing grain producers this year are great. But they can be overcome, just as difficulties have been conquered in the past.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Every wheat farmer should seek a firm contract for the sale or storage of this 1945 crop. If he cannot get it, he should assume that he will have to store much or all of his crop for a time on his farm or in his own community.

2. He should survey his existing storage facilities with this in mind. This survey should show (a) how much space he can count on having at harvest time, and (b) what repairs are needed to make full use of all storage facilities on the farm.

3. He should make similar surveys of community storage facilities.

4. He should study the possibility of improvising emergency storage facilities, both on the farm and in the community. Barns not otherwise used, abandoned schoolhouses, garages, or shops, and other unused buildings offer storage possibilities.



5. He should use available materials, such as used lumber, to the best advantage.

6. He should order new lumber and other necessary materials as soon as possible. County AAA committees will render needed priority assistance. Early ordering is vital; delay may mean non-delivery.

7. Farmers who find it necessary to build emergency bins of snow fencing or wire cribbing should place their orders early with local dealers.

8. The necessary repairs and alterations should be made, and necessary new bins erected, as soon as materials, time, and labor are available.

### Storing the Crop

Special care should be taken to combine wheat only when it is dry and fully ripe. If wet or green wheat is put in storage, excessive heating and spoilage are sure to occur.

When emergency bins of snow fencing or wire cribbing are used, farmers should make sure that the covering is supported firmly in the center, so that rain water and melting snow will flow off, instead of collecting in the middle of the bin. Otherwise leakage may cause heating and spoilage. It is also important to use plenty of posts, to avoid the danger of stored grain breaking through the tarpaper or other lining and pouring on the ground.

If small grain must be piled on the ground, select a well drained location. It is important to make the pile conical and to cover it so that the water will flow off. Care on these points will confine spoilage largely to the outer layers.

### Early Action is Vital

Harvest time will not wait. Transportation presents a question mark which developments in Europe are unlikely to erase. Keeping wheat and other small grain in good condition until it can be moved to ports and terminal markets depends largely on quick action to make sure that ample farm and community storage space will be available and in good condition. If farmers are prepared, so that as little grain as possible spoils or deteriorates, this year's abundance production will be a blessing to them, to the Nation, and to the hungry people of the world.

### Terminal Grain Marketing Committees

The leading grain markets will continue to maintain their Terminal Grain Marketing Committees. The committees represent a cross-section of market interests on each of the markets. Their responsibilities include: (1) continuous and careful survey of unused storage space and the in and out movement of grain; (2) issuance of certificates for shipment of grain to the terminal when the in shipment of grain exceeds the available storage space or terminals are unable to unload cars as fast as they arrive. When certificates must be issued distress grain will be given priority. The use of permits will be discontinued when it is no longer necessary to regulate shipments, however, the committees will be available to function when needed.